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GENERAL ASSEMBLY FIRST COMMITTEE



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BACKGROUND GUIDE 2009

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Official Welcome

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2009 National Model United Nations – DC Conference! This year, the executive staff of the General Assembly First Committee is Director Stacy Jer and Assistant Director Kevin Montoya.

In this committee, we will be discussing three exciting topics of great importance to the global community: the role of private military and security companies in conflict; strengthening of security and cooperation in Afghanistan; and the role of nuclear technology in a peaceful world. We have prepared a background guide as resource to begin your research on these topics. Please read it carefully and make special use of the annotated bibliography for additional research. We encourage all delegates to research the topics and their respective country's position in as much depth as possible. Please remember this background guide is meant to be a starting point for your research; it should not be the sole source of information you use in your preparations.

We look forward to meeting all of you in October for what is sure to be an exciting conference. Best of luck as you continue to prepare for the conference.

History of the General Assembly First Committee

The first stated purpose of the United Nations according to the United Nations Charter, Chapter 1, Article 1 is “to maintain international peace and security.” The General Assembly First Committee on Disarmament and International Security (First Committee) is central to the pursuit of this goal. First Committee is the one of six General Assembly (GA) Main Committees which focuses on specific topics in greater depth. The role of these Main Committees has evolved over time to reflect the changing concerns and developments within the world. First Committee, originally designated the Political and Security Committee, received its current title of the Disarmament and International Security Committee in 1993 (A/RES/47/233). First Committee now considers topics pertaining to global security and weapons ranging from weapons of mass destruction to conventional weapons. For example, during its most recent session in 2008, First Committee considered and passed draft resolutions on topics such as transparency in outer space activities and regional confidence-building measures. The 2008 session also included significant discussion on nuclear weapons and technology.

The First Committee meets every year in October for roughly four to five weeks. First Committee, like every main committee, operates according to the same rules of procedures as the GA. For example, all Member States may be represented in First Committee and draft resolutions are passed by a simple majority. Draft resolutions passed in First Committee are sent to the GA Plenary for final consideration and voting. These draft resolutions, once passed, become resolutions and are not considered legally binding.

I. The Role of Private Military and Security Companies in Conflict

- What kind of role should Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) play in conflict? How can the international community support and regulate this?

Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) are independent contractors that provide military training and/or specialized security services. They often adopt the label of “mercenaries” and are part of a \$100 billion a year industry. According to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), “they represent, in other words, the corporate evolution of the age-old profession of mercenaries.” In 1989, the UNGA adopted A/RES/44/34, *International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries*. Article 1 of this convention extensively defines what it means to be a mercenary; the document also notes that, under international law, “the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries should be considered as offences of grave concern to all States and that any person committing any of these offences should be either prosecuted or extradited.” However, when it comes to PMSCs, the lines tend to be blurred. PMSCs have been used on every continent, bar Antarctica, by more than 50 Member States. While PMSCs have proven to be a valuable and cost-effective resource of Member States, PMSCs often lie outside of the jurisdiction of domestic legal authorities. In July 2005, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) implemented the Working Group on the use

of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the rights of peoples to self-determination (The Working Group) in resolution E/CN.4/RES/2005/2. The Working Group asserted that it is concerned that only 30 States have ratified A/RES/44/34, *Importance of the universal realization of the rights of peoples to self-determination and of the speedy granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples for the effective guarantee and observance of human rights*, and that the lack of regulation at the regional and national levels regarding “private military and security companies which operate without oversight and accountability.”

Modern PMSCs surfaced in the early 1990’s when they were propelled by three compounding factors. First, when the Cold War ended, budgets for professional militaries around the world reduced in size; this led governments to seek cheaper alternatives in order to maintain the same presence on foreign soil. Second, in order to combat instability caused by the withdrawal of, often Western, troops, warfare became less institutionalized and more market based; States began to contract out their duties to forces that ranged from child soldiers and warlords to PMSCs. Third, over time and due to financial feasibility, States became gradually more reliant on the privatization and outsourcing of their functions and responsibilities. These three factors cemented the need for PMSCs. It has also been suggested that the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) should hire PMSCs if Member States are not willing to donate soldiers for peacekeeping operations. Moreover, due to the apparent weakness in these peacekeeping operations, the UN as well as troops in developing countries could actually benefit greatly from the use of PMSCs. This could be accomplished by using PMSCs to better prepare troops for peacekeeping or to provide transportation and communication capacities. Thus, what role should PMSCs have within the international community as well as within the framework of the UN?

II. Strengthening of Security and Cooperation in Afghanistan

- What are some new steps that the international community can take in strengthening security and cooperation in Afghanistan? What are some of the most pressing security challenges that Afghanistan must deal with?

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon has stated, “drug trafficking, organized crime, and terrorism...thwart development and endanger not just the region, but the entire world.” Following the collapse of the Taliban and the implementation of the *Bonn Agreement* in 2001, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) was established in 2002 by Security Council *Resolution 1401*. UNAMA oversees all humanitarian, relief, recovery, and reconstruction activities. The gravest threat to the security and the stability of both the international community and Afghanistan is due to the danger posed by the Taliban, Al-Qaeda, extremist groups, and criminal violence. In an attempt to rectify this situation, despite extreme poverty, ill health, and hunger, Afghans have defined the need for security as their utmost problem. Therefore, in 2004, the Afghan State strived toward the implementation of a ninth *Millennium Development Goal* (MDG): enhance security. The need for security in Afghanistan is of paramount concern and it is essential for the State’s reconstruction. Moreover, if the citizens of the State do not feel secure, not only does the State not attain the MDGs, but any political or humanitarian improvement that has found footing in the last four years will be lost. Security in Afghanistan is of the utmost importance.

In 2006, a positive step was taken with the *London Conference on Afghanistan*. The *Afghanistan Compact*, which was the crowning achievement of the aforementioned conference, was an agreement between the UN, Member States, and Afghanistan that cemented cooperation in efforts to create a peaceful atmosphere in Afghanistan with a strong government, which would preserve peace, provide security, and protect human rights while maintaining economic and social development. The *Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy* (IANDS), also produced by the *London Conference on Afghanistan*, sought to aid in the development of the State. IANDS will require the implementation of the *Afghanistan National Development Strategy* (ANDS) in order to meet the requirements of the *Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper* (PRSP). To prepare the ANDS, the government of Afghanistan will develop and implement ministry-based sector strategies to reach the Compact benchmarks. In total, these programs create the complete Afghanistan National Development Strategy. Moreover, UNAMA, the Afghan Government, and the international community have been leading international civilian efforts such as the Joint Coordination and Monitoring Board (JCMB), which ensures greater coherence of efforts by the Afghan Government and international community to implement the Afghan Compact and provide regular and timely public reports on its execution. Although Afghanistan has taken many positive steps in recent history, there is still much

work to be done by both the international community and the State of Afghanistan. There is still a need to finalize the ANDS, as well as the need for Member States to increase assistance in accordance with Afghanistan compact.

III. The Role of Nuclear Technology in a Peaceful World

- How can the international community monitor and differentiate between the use of nuclear technology for benign or malignant purposes? What safeguards are needed to prevent the misuse of civilian nuclear technology?

Nuclear technology has been used to produce energy for over half a century. Currently, there are approximately 440 nuclear power plants in 31 different countries. Half of the countries possessing nuclear power plants rely on nuclear power for a least 25% of their nation's total energy. Nuclear technology represents a clean, sustainable, and renewable source of energy. Unlike the production of energy through coal, oil, and natural gas, nuclear technology does not release nitrogen oxides or sulfur dioxide into the atmosphere. Unfortunately, the use of nuclear technology as a source of energy is not without caveats. Civilian nuclear technology developed for peaceful economic implementation, such as the production of energy, possesses the potential for misuse. Article IV of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) allows Member States the right to the research, production, and use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. However, given that the steps taken towards the development of nuclear technology for peaceful uses are fundamentally the same as those taken towards the development of nuclear weapons, the challenge of enforcing disarmament and non-proliferation while promoting the peaceful development of nuclear technology arises. For example, in recent decades, several Member States have developed civilian nuclear programs under peaceful auspices only to use their programs for the development of nuclear weapons.

Enriching uranium is a central component to nuclear weapons but also required for fuel production. There must be a means of preventing Member States from using civilian nuclear programs to develop a nuclear weapon. In the past, dialogue pertaining to the development of safeguards against the misuse of nuclear technology has occurred with little consideration for the development of nuclear technology itself. As a result, there is no concrete international consensus on which forms of nuclear technology are considered peaceful. In addition, there have been no collaborative efforts to identify which nuclear technologies are more or less prone to proliferation. Credible options for enforcing non-proliferation and compliance must be developed. Expanding inspections, enabling whistle-blowers, and encouraging multinational collaboration on nuclear technology development and maintenance will only be first steps in the process.

Dialogue pertaining to nonproliferation and curtailing the use of nuclear technology for malicious purposes has been sustained through the last several decades. In addition to proposals designed to specifically address nonproliferation, new proposals have been set-forth to address nuclear technology and its potential for peaceful development. For example former U.S. President George W. Bush's 2004 proposal called for countries to explicitly "renounce" the pursuit of nuclear enrichment technologies in exchange for reliable access to nuclear energy for fuel. Director General of the International Agency on Atomic Energy (IAEA), Mohamed ElBaradei, also presented his own proposal which planned for the placement of all enrichment and reprocessing facilities under multinational control, an end to the production of weapons grade fissile material, and a multinational approach to the management and disposal of spent fuel and radioactive waste. Under a similar tone, a 2005 report by an IAEA Expert Group, "Multilateral Approaches to the Nuclear Fuel Cycle," also suggested that nuclear facilities be co-managed and jointly owned. In 2006 current Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin set forth his own initiative which called for the creation of international centers for uranium-enrichment, nuclear reprocessing, the training and certifying of nuclear power plant staff, and research efforts on proliferation-resistant nuclear energy technology. A substantial number of proposals for international collaboration on peaceful nuclear activities have been made. Unfortunately, many remain under discussion and few have been executed.

Annotated Bibliography

History of the General Assembly First Committee

Fasulo, L. (2004). *An insider's guide to the UN*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Fasulo describes in detail the development, creation, and functions of all of the major organs of the United Nations, including the GA First. Numerous themes and topics explored are not only the creation of the UN but also the role of the United States in its development and many of the current obstacles facing the UN.

Ryan, S. (2001). *The United Nations and international politics*. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Ryan uses his work to examine the creation and development of the United Nations since its inception in 1945. In addition, he also analyzes the role of the United Nations played during the Cold War and into the 1990s. The major theme discussed by Ryan is the obstacles the UN has faced in locating its place in modern society. While the majority of the work focuses on what the UN has done, a section describes the role and mandate of GA First.

United Nations (Ed.). (1945). *Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice*. San Francisco.

With the end of World War II, the Allied Powers with the leadership of the United States were determined "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war." Thus, in 1945 the United Nations was created among several of the countries involved in the War. In order to promote order, the Charter of the United Nations was created to give the countries guidelines by which to promote international peace and security. In addition, it also describes the functions and powers of the different agencies of the United Nations.

I. The Role of Private Military and Security Companies in Conflict

Bures, O. (2008). *Private military companies: A second best peacekeeping option?* Prague: Metropolitan University. Retrieved June 28, 2009, from

http://www.allacademic.com/meta/p_mla_apa_research_citation/2/5/2/9/3/pages252936/p252936-1.php. *Oldrich Bures in this work discusses the role of Private Military and Security Companies (PMSCs) in UN peacekeeping operations. Bures first addresses the definitional issues when it comes to private military actors. Then, he follows this by a review of three perspectives on the use of PMCs in peacekeeping operations. Lastly, Bures puts forward his own perspective of the issue of using PMSCs.*

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (2007) *The working group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of people to self-determination*. Retrieved June 28, 2009, from <http://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/mercenaries/index.htm>. *This is the website for the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination. It provides relevant news, statements, and press releases regarding Private Military and Security Companies. Also, the Web site gives a brief introduction on the Working Group and provides a link to their unofficial website.*

Singer, P.W. (2005). *Outsourcing war: Understanding the private military industry*. Washington, DC: Brookings. Retrieved June 28, 2009, from

http://www.brookings.edu/articles/2005/0301usdepartmentofdefense_singer.aspx *P.W. Singer reviews the evolution of the private military industry. Singer asserts that the industry itself is not likely to disappear anytime soon. Therefore, States must act to address this situation. Moreover, Singer contends that using private solutions for public military ends is not necessarily a bad thing. But the stakes in warfare are far higher than in the corporate realm.*

United Nations. (1989). *International convention against the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries (A/RES/44/34)*. Retrieved June 28, 2009 from

<http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/547/93/IMG/NR054793.pdf?OpenElement>. *This is the United Nations' landmark convention on mercenaries. In this resolution, the General Assembly extensively defines what it means to be a mercenary. Moreover, this resolution underlines what constitutes offence perpetrated by a mercenary as well as condemning those actions.*

Verkuil, P. R. (2007). *Outsourcing sovereignty: Why privatization of government functions threatens democracy and what we can do about it*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
In this work, Paul R. Verkuil asserts that the private military industry and the privatization of public functions have left States less able to govern effectively. It is believed that when decisions that should have been taken by government officials are delegated to private contractors without appropriate oversight, the public interest is jeopardized. Verkuil also offers prescriptions and solutions for this problem.

II. Strengthening of Security and Cooperation in Afghanistan

Afghanistan compact. (2006, February 1). Retrieved June 28, 2009, from United Nations Mission Assistance Mission in Afghanistan Web site:
<http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/AfghanistanCompact-English.pdf>.
The Afghanistan Compact was the result of the London Conference on Afghanistan taking place between January 31 and February 1, 2006. It was an agreement between the government of Afghanistan, the United Nations, and the international community. It established the framework for international cooperation with Afghanistan for the following five years.

Afghanistan national development strategy. (2008). Retrieved June 28, 2009, from <http://www.ands.gov.af/>.
The Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) creates an extensive strategy that will aid in the development of the State. To prepare the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), the government of Afghanistan will develop and implement ministry-based sector strategies to reach the Compact benchmarks. In total, these programs create the complete Afghanistan National Development Strategy.

Agreement on provisional arrangements in Afghanistan pending the re-establishment of permanent government institutions. (2001). Retrieved June 28, 2009, from United Nations Mission Assistance in Afghanistan Web site: <http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Documents/Bonn-agreement.pdf>.
In December 2001, a number of prominent Afghans met in Bonn, Germany under UN auspices, to decide on a plan for governing the State of Afghanistan. The Bonn Agreement was a series of agreements intended to re-create the State of Afghanistan following the U.S. invasion. This was because no nationally agreed upon government had existed in Afghanistan since 1979.

United Nations Development Programme. (2003). *Millennium Development Goals: Enhance Security (Goal 9)*. Retrieved June 28, 2009, from <http://www.undp.org.af/MDGs/goal9.htm>.
This is an overview to goal 9 of the Millennium Development Goals. It highlights that security issues are the most pertinent issues facing Afghanistan. Also, it outlines the goals made for the State as a whole and the target dates for which they are intended to be completed.

United Nations. Security Council. (2002). *Resolution 1401 (2002), (S/RES/1401 (2002))*. Retrieved June 28, 2009, from United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan Web site:
<http://unama.unmissions.org/Portals/UNAMA/Security%20Council%20Resolutions/sc-resolution-1401.pdf>
This resolution was passed by the Security Council (SC) in March of 2002. It established the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), with the mandate and structure laid out in the report of the Secretary-General of 18 March 2002 (S/2002/278). According to this resolution, the UNAMA will report the SC every four months on its status.

III. The Role of Nuclear Technology in a Peaceful World

Diehl, S. J. & Moltz, J. C. (2008). *Nuclear weapons and nonproliferation: a reference handbook*. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, Inc.
Diehl and Moltz present a comprehensive and contemporary analysis of nuclear weapons non-proliferation. While the focus of this piece is on nuclear weapons, it provides useful background on the development of nuclear technology. Students will find this book's historical coverage of nuclear technology useful for building a framework in which to begin examination on this topic.

- Levi, M. A. & O'Hanlon, M. E. (2005). *The future of arms control*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution. *Like the piece by Diehl and Moltz, the main focus of this work is on arms. However with strong chapters devoted to the prevention of nuclear proliferation, new nuclear technology, and compliance, this work is will be useful for examining the topic at hand. Students should consider the points and perspectives presented in this book to formulate their State's stance on nuclear technology and its future.*
- Margulies, P. (2008). *Global issues: Nuclear proliferation*. New York, NY: Facts On File, Inc. *This Margulies piece should be an essential element of student preparation on this topic. This book provides the perfect starting point with its collection of international primary sources and categorized research tools. This book identifies key players on nuclear technology as well as key facts and figures.*
- Nikitin, Mary Beth D, et al. (2008). *Managing the nuclear fuel cycle: Policy implications of expanding global access to nuclear power*. New York, New York: Nova Science Publishers Inc. *This is an excellent research tool that all students should use to add to their comprehension of topic three. This title addresses the issue of nuclear power from a policy perspective and provides cogent information on current policies and recent approaches to the issue of nuclear power and world peace. For example, Nikitin and her peers cover a broad scope of proposals including the El Baradei proposal and the Putin Initiative. This piece will provide a comprehensive guide to understanding the current debate over proposed strategies to redesign the current global nuclear fuel cycle.*
- Pilat, J. F. (Ed.). (2007) *Atoms for peace: A future after fifty years?* Washington D.C.: Woodrow Wilson Center. *Atoms for peace examines nuclear technology and its potential for implementation towards meaningful development and collaboration between nations. The papers presented here have been gathered from a wide and notable list of international experts and policy makers. The collection, a product of a conference held in Washington D.C., takes a rather optimistic stance on the future though with wise caution. The papers cover the history of the atoms for peace concept first presented by former US President Dwight D. Eishenhower, nuclear proliferation and terrorism, nuclear energy, and the future of nuclear technology.*
- United Nations. (1970, March 5). *Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty*. Retrieved July 7, 2009, from <http://www.fas.org/nuke/control/npt/text/npt2.htm>. *The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) is one of the core international agreements limiting armament and ensuring world peace. It prevents the proliferation of nuclear arms. All UN Member States, except India, Israel, North Korea, and Pakistan are parties to the NPT.*
- White, R. S. (2005). *Energy for the public: The case for increased nuclear fission energy*. Santa Barbara, CA: BookSurge LLC. *While this book was written with the purpose of convincing the general public about the merits of nuclear energy, the scientific rhetoric may be difficult for many readers to absorb. White presents the main argument that nuclear energy provides a strong alternative to traditional sources of energy. He argues that nuclear is safe and feasible. This book provides a thorough examination of the arguments for nuclear energy.*